

# Don't Listen, Lithuania

To the Editor:

Robert Schaeffer in "To Lithuania: Stay Put" (Op-Ed, Jan. 3) either lacks understanding of the situation in Lithuania and the history behind it, or he uses false analogies deliberately. For instance, comparing the desire of Lithuanians to be free of foreign oppressors, who have forcibly occupied their country more than once in its long history, is in no manner comparable to the reasons behind our own Civil War. In contrast to Mr. Schaeffer's arguments, stability does not result from condoning foreign occupation, but from freedom and voluntary association.

Lithuania was an independent state or a voluntary partner in the union with Poland until forcibly occupied by Russia in 1772 as a result of the first partition of Lithuania and Poland. The Lithuanian people experienced suppression of their religion, language and customs under the czars and mass deportations to Siberia under forced incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1939, the result of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact.

That this annexation is illegal and is so considered by our own Government, which has never recognized the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union, Mr. Schaeffer conveniently ignores, along with the acknowledgment by the Soviet deputies and by Mikhail S. Gorbachev that the annexation was illegal.

Mr. Schaeffer's arguments smack of the politics of expediency at their most cynical. All the arguments that he makes asking Lithuanians to stay put could have just as well been applied to the American colonists in the second half of the 18th century and to the Poles, East Germans, Czechoslovaks, Rumanians and Hungarians of today.

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